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Medical Officer's Report

ON THE

HEALTH &
SANITARY
CONDITION

OF THE

Urban District of Springhead

FOR THE

Year ending 31st December, 1925.



OLDHAM :

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REPORT.



*To the Chairman and Members of the
Springhead Urban District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

As requested by you, I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1925.

In accordance with the Memorandum issued by the Minister of Health a brief description of the physical features and general character of the district is required, though the following facts may seem superfluous locally.

The Springhead Urban District is situated in the western corner of the Saddleworth Union. On the north and east it abuts on the Saddleworth Urban District, whilst its western and southern boundaries form the County boundary between Lancashire and Yorkshire. The County Borough of Oldham abuts on to the north, and the Urban District of Lees on the south and centre. The district has a length of about three miles from High Bank Farm in the north to Holly Bank in the south, and its greatest width from east to west is about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles and covers an area of 1,555 acres.

Its surface varies from about 550 feet above sea level at the "Gardener's Arms," Waterhead, the lowest point, to 1,196 feet near "High Lea Farm," the highest.

The population is entirely scattered, the northern half is almost entirely so called agricultural, as is also the eastern half of the southern portion. The greater portion of the northern half of the district is within the gathering area of the Strinesdale Reservoirs of the Oldham Corporation. The remaining portion is a manufacturing centre, with cotton mills and centres of population at Waterhead, Austerlands, Den Lane, Springhead, Lydgate and Quickedge.

Population at census of 1921: 4,880, a decrease of 172 on the census of 1911. The estimated population at the end of 1925 is 5209.

No. of Inhabited Houses, 1925	- - - - -	1,305
No. of Working Class Houses	- - - - -	1,193
Rateable value of the district for 1925 was £23,969/2/6		
Sum represented by a Penny rate, £91/6/0.		

Births.

The total number of births registered in the district during the year was 71, of which 41 were males and 30 were females. Of the males, 2 were illegitimate; of the females, 1.

This number was a decrease of 13 as compared with the year 1924 and is equal to a rate of 13·6 per 1000 of the population.

The birth rate for 1924 was 16·8

The birth rate for the whole of England and Wales for 1925 was 18·3.

Deaths.

The total number of deaths registered in the district was 48 and 14 registered outside, and therefore transferable to the district making a total of 62. 32 males and 30 females, giving a death rate of 11·9 per 1,000 of the population.

The death rate for 1924 was 10·6.

Phthisis death rate for 1925, 0·038

The death rate for the whole of England and Wales for 1925 was 12·2.

The causes of death were as follows:—

					Males	Females
Appendicitis	...	...	...	...	1	0
Diabetes	...	...	...	...	1	0
Tuberculosis of respiratory system	...	...	...	...	1	1
Other Tuberculous Diseases	...	...	...	...	1	0
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	0	3
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	0	5
Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	...	1	0
Cancer	...	...	...	...	3	4
Cerebral Hæmorrhage	...	...	...	...	2	1
Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	8	7
Diarrhœa	...	...	...	...	1	1
Premature Birth	...	...	...	...	2	1
Other defined Diseases	...	...	...	...	8	6
Suicide	...	...	...	...	1	0
Other deaths from violence	...	...	...	...	2	1
					32	30

Infantile Mortality.

There were 7 deaths under 12 months of age as compared with 4 in 1924, giving a rate of 83·3 per 1,000 births registered.

The rate of Infantile Mortality for the whole of England and Wales was 75.

The following are the causes of death under 12 months :

Premature Birth	...	...	...	...	2
Gastro-Enteritis	...	...	...	...	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	2
Primary Idiopathic Wasting	...	...	...	...	1
Asphyxiation	...	...	...	...	1

Means of Preventing Mortality in Childbirth and in Infancy.

Visiting under the Notification of Births' Act is carried out by the Nurse acting under instructions from the County Medical Authorities.

Sanitary Circumstances of the District. Water Supply.

Practically the whole district (with the exception of a small area in the Strinesdale portion) is supplied with water from the Oldham Corporation and the Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge and Dukinfield (District) Waterworks.

For some months during the year the water supplied by the Oldham Corporation to some parts of the Higher Ward, more particulary in the region of the Doctor Lane and Higher Turf Lane, has contained an excessive amount of mineral matter deposited in the pipes. The District Council drew the attention of the Oldham Corporation to the condition of the water. The Corporation adopted more regular flushing of the pipes, with only temporary improvement.

Rivers and Streams.

The majority of streams in the district are still pulluted, but this is being remedied under the Sewerage Scheme.

Drainage and Sewerage.

The long contemplated Sewerage Scheme (begun in September, 1913, but delayed on account of the war) has been completed, and the outfall works at Two Bridges were formally opened on the 17th October, 1921.

The Sewers throughout the whole district have been laid and most of the properties have been connected. Borrowing powers have been obtained for connections to Sewers.

969 Houses were connected in 1924 }
48 ,, ,, 1925 } making a total of 1,017.

The work of connecting the sewers is being rapidly pushed forward and it is hoped the whole scheme will be completed during the present year.

Closet Accommodation.

Privies with open Middens.....	28
Number of Pail Closets	804
Number of Water Closets	55
Number of Waste Water Closets...	11

Scavenging.

The whole of the Scavenging for the district is performed by contract, and on the whole is adequate. The Pail Closets and Ash Bins are emptied weekly.

Nuisance Inspections.

The total number of Inspections made in 1925 was 32.

One Statutory Notice has been served which has been complied with. 6 Informal Notices served of which 5 have been complied with.

Total number of Nuisances in hand at close of 1924 ...	1
Total number of Nuisances in hand at close of 1925 ...	3
Total number of Nuisances reported during 1925	12
Total number of Nuisances abated during 1925.....	10

No summonses or other legal proceedings.

There are no Common Lodging-houses, Canal Boats, or Knackers' Yards, and no Offensive Trades in the district.

Schools.

Your Medical Officer visits regularly all the Schools in the district, and special visits are made as occasion arises.

Disinfectants are supplied to all schools in the districts for systematic use. The Sanitary conditions and Water Supply to the Schools are satisfactory.

Medical Inspection of School Children is carried out by the County Medical Officer (and his assistants) who is the School Medical Officer for the district.

The Springhead District Nurse, who also acts as Assistant Sanitary Inspector, has attended 269 patients, and paid, during the year, 1,744 visits to sick people; and in addition has paid 158 casual visits to give advice to people re health and sanitation.

The County Council Nurse has paid the following visits:—

Health	Schools	Homes
1,057	36	51

Total... 3,046.

Milk Supply.

No Complaints of dirty milk have been notified, and no adulteration detected. No cases of disease have been attributed to milk in 1925.

Veterinary Inspection of dairy cows to be made in cases suspected by the M.O.H. to be tubercular. There are 75 Cowsheds, to which 67 inspections have been made during 1925: 33 of the Cow-sheds are in good condition, 40 are fair and 2 are bad. 20 of the above are empty.

Very few of the Cowsheds classified as in good condition come up to my ideal of what they ought to be, there is much room for improvement in the best of them.

Approximate number of Milch Cows in the district 371

Other Foods.

There have been no samples of food taken for examination under the Food and Drugs Act.

There are four Slaughter-houses in the district, which are all registered. 2 are unsatisfactory on account of proximity to dwelling houses. Total number of inspections 4.

There are 9 bakehouses, none underground. Total number of inspections 10.

No prosecutions have been made *re* (a) Food and Drugs; (b) Slaughter-houses; (c) Unsound Food.

Summary of Housing Work.

Houses not reasonably fit for habitation in 1924,	1
„ Inspected and recorded,	6
„ „ found satisfactory,	4
„ „ „ with defects,	2
„ „ made fit after formal notice,	2
„ Not reasonably fit for habitation in 1925,	1

Housing.

I.—HOUSING.

- (1)—Total number of houses 1,305
Number of working class houses ... 1,193
- (2)—Population. Estimated for 1925 is 5,209
- (3)—Shortage of houses.

II.—OVERCROWDING.

- (1)—Extent: 28 houses occupied by 261 persons.
- (2)—Causes: Shortage of houses and objections of property owners to letting houses to large families.
- (3)—No particular action taken against overcrowding during 1924.

III.—FITNESS OF HOUSES.

- (1)—(a) General Standard: One-half of the houses in the district are below Ministry of Health's standard.
- (b) General character of defects:
 - No separate yards.
 - No through ventilation.
 - Back to earth causing dampness.
 - Flagged floors causing dampness.
- (2)—No regular action taken as regards unfit houses.
- (3)—Difficulties in remedying unfitness: cost of alteration would in many cases be prohibitive.
- (4)—Water supply, closet accommodation, and refuse disposal adequate.

IV.—UNHEALTHY AREAS.

There are still two unhealthy areas in the district, one at Millbottom ($\frac{1}{2}$ acre), and the other at Slack Hall, Austerlands ($\frac{1}{4}$ acre).

Action has not yet been taken on account of no accommodation being available for dispossessed tenants.

Factories and Workshops.

Factories 16; Workshops 8; No. of Inspections 8, (excluding visits of M.O.H.) The closet accommodation of these is satisfactory. The Fire Escapes are considered by the L.A. to be sufficient.

Three Smoke Observations have been taken during the year and 3 cautioned.

Sanitary Administration of the District.

There is no Hospital for Infectious Diseases and no arrangements have been made with any neighbouring local authority; this condition of things is much to be regretted that all infectious cases should be treated at home.

A Joint Hospital Committee was formed before the War embracing Springhead, Lees and Saddleworth, which had under consideration the question of providing a suitable Hospital for the district, with the necessary steam disinfectors and ambulance. As each year passes the need for such a Hospital becomes more pressing, and it is to be hoped that the Ministry of Health will shortly advocate the building of an Isolation Hospital for these districts.

Bye-Laws and Regulations.

No Chemical or Bacteriological Work has been undertaken, beyond the examination of Sputum, Blood, etc., for purposes of diagnosis. Supplies of Anti-Diphtheritic Serum are kept at the Council Offices for use by local practitioners.

The following are in force in the district:—

New Streets and Buildings (P.H. Amendment Act, 1890, Part III)	.....Aug. 11th, 1909
Part II.....	1907
Regulations under Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milk Shops' Act	.....March 10th, 1907

Prevalence of and Control over Acute Infectious Diseases.

The district has been wonderfully free of Infection, only 28 cases reported, and half of these were Scarlet Fever, which were distributed over the whole district. There were no cases of Measles, Mumps, or Whooping Cough; but, I regret to report that Tuberculosis still holds its sway among the inhabitants.

DISEASE.	No. Notified	Case rate per 1,000 living in Springhead.	Case rate per 1,000 living in England & Wales
Scarlet Fever	14	2'6	'03
Pneumonia	5	'9	
Chicken-pox	1	0'19	
Tuberculosis	8	1'6	
(a) Pulmonary	4		
(b) Non-Pulmonary ...	4		

Total number of cases reported 28, as compared with 170 in 1924.

8 cases of Tuberculosis (under Tuberculosis Regulation 1912) were notified during 1924. Of these 4 were Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 4 of other parts. There is no Sanatorium or Hospital accommodation for these cases in the district.

These cases are visited by the County Authorities and are treated at the Branch Dispensary at Uppermill, or at one of the County Sanatoria. A Weekly or fortnightly Dispensary in Springhead would be of great value to the tubercular patients residing in the district.

Health Week.

Health week was observed in a much better fashion than last year. The suggestions of the M.O.H. were adopted by the District Council, and the Ministers of the different denominations made special reference from the pulpit to the health of the body, during Health Week.

The M.O.H. visited each school in the district and gave an address to the children on "How neglecting the teeth influences the health of the body in after life." Health Cards (relative to the subject) were also distributed to everychild in the schools.

I desire to express my indebtedness to Mr. F. Bullivant (Sanitary Inspector), to Nurse Howarth (District Nurse), and Nurse Gartside (County Nurse), for their valuable assistance in compiling this Report.

W. OLIVER, M.B., C.M.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

MANOR HOUSE,
WATERHEAD, OLDHAM.

